Celebrated Indian sculpture debuts at The Cleveland Museum of *Art in Shiva: A Recent Acquisition*

Exhibition opening June 24 highlights Museum's newest work of South Indian sculpture

CLEVELAND (June 18, 2007) — *Shiva as Brahma* (South India, Chola dynasty, late 10th/Early 11th century), a life-sized sculptural representation of one of the supreme deities of the Hindu pantheon, will make its Cleveland debut alongside other key works from The Cleveland Museum of Art's holdings of Indian sculpture in the exhibition, *Shiva: A Recent Acquisition*, opening June 24, 2007 at CMA.

Shiva: A Recent Acquisition will feature *Shiva as Brahma*, acquired in spring 2007, displayed along with *Shiva's Gajasura-Samharamurti* (South India, Chola period, 11th century), *Shiva as Tripuravijaya, Victor of the Three Cities and Consort* (South India, Chola period, 10th century), *Nataraja: Shiva as the King of Dance* (South India, Chola period, 900-13th century) and *Trident with Shiva as Ardhanari, Half Woman* (South India, Chola period, 900-13th century) presents a "best of" highlights from CMA's collection of Indian art. The sculptures on display were carefully selected to focus on the supreme deity Shiva and his many manifestations in religion of Shaivism.

"As the finest of its kind in the US, this sculpture of Shiva is a highly important acquisition for the CMA," Charles Venable, CMA deputy director for collections & programs, said. "It is especially significant that the trustees accepted this statue into the collection through the Leonard C. Hanna Jr., Fund in honor of Stanislaw Czuma who recently retired as the George P. Bickford Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art. During his three decades at the museum, Dr. Czuma built the CMA's collection of Indian sculpture into one of the finest in the world. Our new representation of Shiva will be the jewel in the crown for this great collection and is a tribute to a great curator."

Shiva as Brahma, widely recognized as a superb example of Chola stone sculpture, is one of a group of works recently deaccessioned by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York. The Gallery has decided to use the funds generated by the sale of objects that were judged not to be central to its mission to strengthen its endowment for the acquisition of modern and contemporary art. The price paid for this work, $4.072 million, including the buyer's premium, set a record for a work of Indian sculpture sold at auction. *Shiva as Brahma*, underscores the CMA's focus on the continued development of a collection that today has few rivals

in terms of its quality and depth. This exquisite recent acquisition broadens the scope of the museum's holdings of Shiva in his various forms.

Shiva as Brahma portrays one of the principal Hindu deities as the omnipotent god who destroys the universe to recast it in a more perfect form. This rare life-size stone sculpture blends the features and attributes of Shiva the Destroyer with Brahma the Creator, whose four heads look toward the cardinal points: north, south, east, and west. *Shiva as Brahma* belongs to a small group of sculptures initially identified as Brahma (the "Creator" in Hindu lore, combines iconographic features of two deities: Brahma and Shiva (with the third eye on his forehead and his gestured hands in blessing (*abhaya*) and teaching (*varada mudras)*.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's foremost museums, with a renowned permanent collection that includes more than 42,000 works of art that span more than 6,000 years of creative achievement. It is widely recognized for the scope and quality of its exhibitions and programs as well as its commitment to scholarship and public education. For more information on the CMA, please call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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